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15. THE ASSOCIATIONS OF *UKULOGA* AND *UKUPITA*

Mwainumo (clerk).

'*Ukuloga* is like *ukupita* but not the same. It is said that when someone is angry with you and has drunk a medicine to give him power to bewitch (*amaka ga kuloga*), he greets you and the word alone has power to bring illness. You will be very ill.

'It is said that when a woman is pregnant and walks round a person who has many medicines, one of them being a medicine *ukuloga*, she will have a miscarriage. There is no case (against the owner of the medicines).

'It is said that when the owner of pythons, or the owner of medicines, passes when food has been spread out to dry, the food will disappear. He bewitches it (*ukuloga*). It is as if he hankered after the food in his heart; it disappears and becomes less. When a python man ("he of pythons")—they speak much of python men, little of medicine men—passes cattle and hankers after milk, he bewitches the milk (*ukuloga*). It disappears. He does not throttle (*ukupita*) the cattle; no, the milk just disappears.

'It is forbidden to say of a child that it is beautiful. It is all right to a close friend but not among ordinary people. To do so is to bewitch (*ukuloga*) the child. The child will fall ill. It is forbidden to say of a cow that its udder is big. If the owner hears he says: "You are bewitching it" (*ukuloga*), meaning the milk will disappear. Everyone fears to admire children or cows in this way; if such a sign is followed by sickness or failure of milk people swear at the man who has expressed admiration, but do not bring a case.

'The work of pythons is especially to steal away the milk, to throttle (*ukupita*). It is reported that some say: "I am a witch, but I have not got a python. I do not throttle the cows." They might mean they "eat" people but do not steal milk.'

Kakugu (pagan man).

'*Ukupita* is to throttle (with hands round the throat).'

In reply to a question as to the further meanings of the word *ukupita*, Kakugu said: 'When my relatives are there I say: "Have you *kupita* with my wife?" But when we are alone I say: "Did you sleep with my wife?" or "Did you have intercourse with her (*gwakgwa*

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789 754 196 *nagwe*)?" We only liken intercourse and witchcraft; witchcraft is quite different. When a woman is an adulteress I say: "You are a witch (*undoni*); you kill me," but it is just a metaphor (*fyo fifuami*). Adultery involves paying for cattle for all of us; it differs from witchcraft. And when I ask a man: "Why, why did you *kupita* with my wife?" that means: "You are like a witch." It is just a metaphor. But (he volunteered), if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised *coitus interruptus*, I am angry and kill him from jealousy, though I do not suffer from diarrhoea.'

837 753 An adulteress is spoken of as an *undoni* 'because she brings illness upon her husband' by her adultery, if intercourse is complete, but not, it is thought, if *coitus interruptus* is practised. The illness commonly thought to be caused by a wife's adultery is diarrhoea.

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mourners sat) is sprinkled with powdered medicine and carried out by the officiant and burnt, or thrown away under the bananas. If the deceased has been buried elsewhere still a bunch of banana leaves representing the *ulufumbo* is taken out. 'Until then the rubbish (*iminda*) is kept in the house and not swept out because they are grieving—a person cannot be clean, it would seem as if he did not grieve.'

Next the officiant takes an old pot and, holding it, circles round the hearth while her assistant drops pumpkin-seeds, beans, lentils and cowpeas into it and the participants sing: 'The croaking bird, the croaking bird (*ilimwemwe*).' The food is transferred to another pot and put on the fire and the officiant touches the hearth with different parts of her body (or makes gestures as if to do so), she and the participants saying as she does so: 'The knee is also put on (the fire), the heel is also put on, the backs of the knees are also put on, the loins are also put on, the belly is also put on, the back of the head is also put on.' Then she stamps noisily on the hearth, and the participants sing: 'It startles him. . . .'

Relatives and village neighbours are expected to bring small gifts of millet at this ritual and these are formally received by the officiant, who sits outside the mourning hut with two large baskets beside her and acknowledges each gift as it is brought and emptied into one or other of them. The one is for the millet of kinsmen, the other for that of neighbours. She addresses each giver in terms of his or her relationship to the deceased, announcing: 'Your grandchild has brought a measure, your daughter has brought a measure, your fellow (i.e. neighbour) has brought a measure, etc. . . .' This is spoken of as 'measuring the measures' (*ukupela imipela*); it is 'to greet the shade', and if millet is not available at the time the ritual is performed it is done symbolically.

A fresh piece of bark is stripped from the species of *ficus* used for making bark-cloth, hammered a little and placed on a fresh banana leaf and sprinkled with powdered medicine. A grindstone is lifted on to it and the officiant grinds some of the millet just presented and allows it to fall on the bark. During the grinding the officiant says: 'The knee is also ground, the heels are also ground,' and so on, mentioning the belly and loins. From the time of the death until this ritual, hammering of bark-cloth in the home of the deceased is taboo (*mwiko*), for hammering bark-cloth is a symbol of sexual intercourse and 'the hammer belonged to him who died'. The first millet ground is made into a paste and later

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We interpret the induction, seclusion, and bringing out as symbols of death and rebirth. There can be no doubt that the induction and seclusion represent death. Strewing leaves—or laying a litter—which is an essential act in every induction is a sign of misfortune and death;[1] and at the induction of a bride her 'mothers' sing: 'Go, go and never return', and 'We wail a dirge'. The mourners, the nubile girl, the mother of a new-born child, and the parents of twins are all 'filthy' and one with the dead; Kasitile said of mourners: 'We have died, we *are* the corpse.' The period of seclusion implies a sojourn with the shades, and our hypothesis is that it represents *both* death and gestation. The hut appears as a symbol of the womb in the pregnancy and 'gasping cough' rituals, and the doorway which 'belongs to the shades' is a symbol for the vagina. In the pregnancy ritual, passing through the doorway is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of birth, and in the death ritual mourners come out of the doorway stooping, and bump their heads against an obstruction. In the 'bringing out' in the death and puberty rituals, the mourners and the nubile girl run in and out of the doorway and water drops from the thatch. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted this as a symbol of the mourners' receiving the shade back on to their bodies. We interpret it, rather more widely, as a symbol of rebirth. Both men and spirit are reborn, the shade in the bodies of the participants.

All through the rituals the connection of the shades with potency and fertility is emphasized. They cause menstruation and sexual desire; they are present in intercourse and ejected as semen; they control conception; they control fertility in the fields. 'The shade and the semen are brothers.'[2] 'When they shake the millet and pumpkin-seeds (after ritual connection) the seed is semen . . . and it is the shade. . . .' The symbols of male and female, plantain and sweet banana, recur repeatedly. The wearing of them is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of fertility, and laying them together under the litter is perhaps a symbol of the marriage union, like eating the banana with *ihipiki* medicine. Intercourse between husband and wife is the culmination of the rituals of death, puberty, and twin birth, and is held to be essential to the health of

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 230.

[2] cf. Bhaca, *idlozi*: shade, semen (W. D. Hammond-Tooke, *A General Ethnographic Survey of the amaBhaca*. Unpublished thesis presented for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Cape Town); Xhosa, *idlozi*: semen virile (A. Kropf, *Kafir-English Dictionary*); Zulu, *idlozi*: departed spirit (C. M. Doke and Vilakazi, *A Dictionary of the Zulu Language*).